



NORTH DAKOTA
DEPARTMENT *of* HEALTH

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
April 15, 2014

For More Information, Contact:
BriAnna Wanner
NDDoH Employee Wellness Coordinator
Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity
North Dakota Department of Health
(Phone) 701.328.4529
(E-mail) bnwanner@nd.gov
OR
Jennifer Childress, MS, MCHES
HealthLead Consultant
US Healthiest
jchildress@ushealthiest.org
515.422.4498
www.ushealthiest.org

North Dakota Department of Health First in Nation to Achieve *HealthLead*[™] Accreditation for Workplace Wellness

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) recently learned they have achieved what no other state health department in the nation has achieved: *HealthLead*[™] US Healthiest Workplace Accreditation status. The department received a Bronze Level accreditation for their Employee Wellness Program which provides employees with information, resources, and a comprehensive, supportive environment that fosters a culture of health. In achieving Bronze Level accreditation, the North Dakota Department of Health participated in *HealthLead*, a comprehensive two-step accreditation process which sets standards for employers to encourage employee health management and well-being.

“The North Dakota Health Department really walks their talk” says Nick Baird, MD, CEO of US Healthiest. “They think about how to best support their employees and their overall health through both traditional and innovative ways. For example, the culture they’ve created through their Babies to Work policy, allowing employees to bring their infants (up to 6 months old) to work has fostered this really neat community dynamic, bringing employees together in this “it takes a village” mindset, where everyone benefits from the parents being able to improve their

-more-

600 E. Boulevard Ave. Dept. 301, Bismarck, North Dakota 58505-0200
Phone: 701.328.2372 Fax: 701.328.4727 E-mail: health@nd.gov

Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

bond with their babies, and not have to leave work; to other employees who benefit from the pure joy of having this youthful presence. It was fascinating to learn more about this dynamic. Through their story, I turned from skeptic to supporter on how a policy like theirs can positively impact a workplace.”

According to BriAnna Wanner, Employee Wellness Coordinator for the NDDoH, “the wellness program’s theme of ‘Finding a Way to a Better You’ focuses on improving health opportunities in the department. Through department wellness fundraisers, money is generated to improve the wellness programs and also to support local charities in the community.”

North Dakota Department of Health joins other *HealthLead* Accredited organizations investing in comprehensive worksite health employee management as part of their overall business strategy. Including NDDoH, there are 17 accredited organizations to date, including Target Corporation, Intel, The Ohio State University, DTE Energy and HealthPartners, among other employers representing various sizes and industries.

Dr. Terry Dwelle, North Dakota State Health Officer, says “the HealthLead Accreditation process has encouraged us to compare our employee wellness program to best practice standards. We have been able to capitalize on our positive activities and continue to grow in areas that have been dormant in our organization. Overall, the HealthLead Accreditation has motivated us to be more consciously engaged in our wellness activities at the North Dakota Department of Health.”

About *HealthLead*™

The *HealthLead* US Healthiest Workplace Accreditation Program recognizes organizations that demonstrate best practices in employee health management and well-being. *HealthLead* is designed to set the standard for workplace health management by expanding the definition and breadth of employee health to include integrated well-being support services and engagement and leadership in community health issues. *HealthLead* helps organizations learn and continue to improve the quality of delivered services. www.ushealthiest.org.

For more information, contact BriAnna Wanner of the North Dakota Department of Health at 701.328.4529 or Jennifer Childress, HealthLead Consultant, at 515.422.4498.

– 30 –

Please note: To access archived news releases and other information, visit the North Dakota Department of Health Press Room at www.nddohpressroom.gov.

Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/ndhealth or twitter at twitter.com/nddoh